

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS DUBLIN 001477

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [SENV](#)

SUBJECT: IRISH PRESIDENT MCALEESE DECLARED ELECTED FOR 2ND TERM

1. (SBU) Summary. On Friday, October 1, incumbent Irish President Mary McAleese was constitutionally elected to office unopposed for a second term of seven years. Her inauguration is scheduled to take place on November 11, 2004. President McAleese told Ambassador Kenny that her primary motivation in running for a second seven-year term is to support the Northern Ireland peace process. End Summary.

BUILDING ON THE FIRST TERM

2. (U) At the Custom House in Dublin on October 1, the Chief Returning Officer, Mr. Maurice Coughlan, announced Mary McAleese's mandated re-election as President of Ireland. As no other candidate received the required twenty senatorial signatures or endorsement of four counties, President McAleese was constitutionally mandated to receive a second term, without voters going to the polls. (The Irish Constitution has specific presidential election rules, declaring that if only one presidential nominee exists by the nomination deadline, then that person is automatically elected president.) McAleese is so popular that political parties deemed it a waste of resources to try to oppose her. The Green party and Labour party asked would-be candidates from among their ranks to stand down. Independent Dana Rosemary Scallan fought longer for support, but failed to get the necessary signatures to run. She has gained some sympathy questioning whether Ireland's rules are "democratic," since they make it easier for an incumbent to run than a challenger, and provide for a mandated election instead of a ballot in the case of a one-candidate race. In the end, though, given McAleese's popularity and the limited power of the presidency, the issue never gained real traction. McAleese will be inaugurated on November 11, 2004, at Dublin Castle.

3. (U) The theme of President McAleese's first term was "Building Bridges" and it is expected that her second term will revolve around similar issues. She is best known for supporting issues of justice, equality, social inclusion, anti-sectarianism, and reconciliation. During her first term, McAleese attempted to "build bridges" through increased cooperation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. She is very devoted to continuing the Irish peace process, creating quality social programs for the disabled, and enhancing cross-border cooperation within the European Union.

BIO

4. (U) McAleese was elected as the 8th President of Ireland in 1997. Born in Belfast, she is the first president from Northern Ireland. In 1994, after serving as the Director of the Institute of Professional Legal Studies at Queen's University of Belfast for seven years, McAleese became the first female Pro-Vice Chancellor at the university. McAleese also served as a Barrister and a Professor of Law at Trinity College. She has extensive experience as a current affairs journalist in radio and television. President McAleese is married to Martin McAleese, a well-known accountant and dentist who also hails from Northern Ireland. They have three children.
KENNY